



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Park of
American Samoa

Pago Pago, AS 96799

Michael Larson
Public Information Officer
684 699-3982 ext 20 phone
684 699-3986 fax

National Park of American Samoa News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Park Donates 2,000 Native Trees to Local Villages

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa—In an effort to increase ifilele tree populations, the National Park of American Samoa donated 2,000 trees to the Office of Samoan Affairs to share with each of the 56 villages in the territory. Each village accepted the challenge to plant and maintain their 40 new seedlings.

In Samoa, this tree has become increasingly rare because of its excessive removal. The national park protects one of the largest populations of these trees in American Samoa between Afono and Fagasa villages.

The ifilele tree grows to about 100 feet / 30 meters high in coastal areas up to the mountaintops throughout the Asia-Pacific region, including Tonga, Vanuatu, and Fiji. It is a culturally significant tree and widely considered the best wood available to make ava bowls (tanoa), house posts (pou fale), and build canoes (pao pao).

“These trees are pillars of the Samoan culture and our native rainforests. Without them, fale wouldn’t have posts and our forests would be unhealthy,” said Superintendent Mike Reynolds.

Both inside and outside of the National Park of American Samoa, small groups and individual ifilele trees are protected as important seed sources. The seeds are collected by the national park to grow new seedlings for planting in areas where it was once common. To obtain free ifilele seedlings, contact the national park or the American Samoa Community College’s Land Grant Office.

Continued

Under the direction of Terrestrial Ecologist Tavita Togia, the national park's terrestrial crew continues its efforts to eradicate invasive plants and replant native species. Since October 2010, over 1,700 native trees have been planted.

This is a combined program with the Office of Samoan Affairs and the American Samoa Community College, College of Community and Natural Resources.

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The National Park of American Samoa was established in 1988 to preserve the coral reefs, tropical rainforest, archeological and cultural resources, the habitat of fruit bats, and to provide educational opportunities for visitors and residents. National park lands and waters are leased from villages and the American Samoa Government through a long-term agreement with the National Park Service.

For more information about visiting the National Park of American Samoa, call 699-3982, email NPSA_Info@nps.gov, or go to www.nps.gov/npsa. Also, visit the national park's Facebook and Twitter pages.

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